

The Welch 'Denial'

THE FINE ART of doubletalk must certainly now be added to the list of questionable techniques employed by Robert Welch, "The Founder" (as his followers refer to him) of the ultra-conservative John Birch society.

Welch, assuming an air of stunned indignation, has now issued a statement denying that he ever said, publicly or privately, that former President Eisenhower is a "card-carrying Communist." Added Welch: "Anybody who says I have is either knowingly dealing in falsehood or is badly misinformed."

AND JUST what did he say—and does not deny? He said that Dwight Eisenhower "is a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy." (This appeared in an invective-loaded "private confidential letter" which Welch acknowledges he wrote prior to formation of the society.)

There is a difference, you see—in the Welchian doubletalk — between actually carrying a card and being a "conscious" agent of communism. (!)

One further example of tortured semantics from the "denial": Welch said he never had the opinion Eisenhower was a Red agent. In his words, "I never thought it then with firmness enough to publish it or to say it in public and I don't today."

Yet in his private letter Welch attributed his conclusions about Eisenhower's being "a dedicated, conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy" to "an accumulation of detailed evidence so extensive and so palpable that it seems to me to put this conviction beyond any reasonable doubt." Not a "firm" statement?

It is appalling to learn, too, that Welch's attempts to smear national figures of the caliber of Eisenhower, John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles and others have continued beyond publication of the private letter.

PRIOR TO President Kennedy's election, according to the New York Times, Welch said Mr. Kennedy was "smart enough to know" he would have to have behind-the-scenes support from Communists to be nominated and that "such an amoral man can do a tremendous amount of ball-carrying on behalf of the Communist aims here in the United States."

We do not believe that the cause of anti-communism is well served by such irrational, irresponsible bile.

Nor do we believe that Attorney General Robert Kennedy took an adequate stance against the Birch society by assigning it to "the area of being humorous" at his first press conference in Washington last week. There is nothing "humorous" about an organization whose leader, Welch, advocates an end to all civil rights programs in the United States. This should be particularly evident to the U.S. attorney general, who has considerable responsibility for safeguarding civil rights.

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